

Global Grey Ebooks



**DISCOURSE ON THE ORIGIN
OF INEQUALITY AMONG MEN**

JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU

**DISCOURSE ON THE
ORIGIN OF INEQUALITY
AMONG MEN**

JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU



Discourse on the Origin of Inequality Among Men by Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

First published in 1755.

This edition was taken from an anthology (Harvard Classics Volume 34) published in 1910.

This ebook edition was created and published by Global Grey on the 21st March 2022.

The artwork used for the cover is '*Jean-Jacques Rousseau*'

Painted by Allan Ramsay.

This book can be found on the site here:

globalgreyebooks.com/discourse-on-the-origin-of-inequality-among-men-ebook.html

©Global Grey 2021

globalgreyebooks.com

Contents

Introductory Note

Dedication

Preface

Introduction

First Part

Second Part

that the savage lives within himself, whereas the citizen, constantly beside himself, knows only how to live in the opinion of others; insomuch that it is, if I may say so, merely from their judgment that he derives the consciousness of his own existence. It is foreign to my subject to show how this disposition engenders so much indifference for good and evil, notwithstanding so many and such fine discourses of morality; how everything, being reduced to appearances, becomes mere art and mummery; honour, friendship, virtue, and often vice itself, which we at last learn the secret to boast of; how, in short, ever inquiring of others what we are, and never daring to question ourselves on so delicate a point, in the midst of so much philosophy, humanity, and politeness, and so many sublime maxims, we have nothing to show for ourselves but a deceitful and frivolous exterior, honour without virtue, reason without wisdom, and pleasure without happiness. It is sufficient that I have proved that this is not the original condition of man, and that it is merely the spirit of society, and the inequality which society engenders, that thus change and transform all our natural inclinations.

I have endeavoured to exhibit the origin and progress of inequality, the institution and abuse of political societies, as far as these things are capable of being deduced from the nature of man by the mere light of reason, and independently of those sacred maxims which give to the sovereign authority the sanction of divine right. It follows from this picture, that as there is scarce any inequality among men in a state of nature, all that which we now behold owes its force and its growth to the development of our faculties and the improvement of our understanding, and at last becomes permanent and lawful by the establishment of property and of laws. It likewise follows that moral inequality, authorised by any right that is merely positive, clashes with natural right, as often as it does not combine in the same proportion with physical inequality: a distinction which sufficiently determines, what we are able to think in that respect of that kind of inequality which obtains in all civilised nations, since it is evidently against the law of nature that infancy should command old age, folly conduct wisdom, and a handful of men should be ready to choke with superfluities, while the famished multitude want the commonest necessaries of life.

I'm Julie, the woman who runs [Global Grey](#) - the website where this ebook was published. These are my own formatted editions, and I hope you enjoyed reading this particular one.

If you have this book because you bought it as part of a collection - thank you so much for your support.

If you downloaded it for free - please consider (if you haven't already) making a small [donation](#) to help keep the site running.

If you bought this from Amazon or anywhere else, you have been ripped off by someone taking free ebooks from my site and selling them as their own. You should definitely get a refund :/

Thanks for reading this and I hope you visit the site again - new books are added regularly so you'll always find something of interest :)